

Midterm Project – Mrs. Senft

Your midterm project entails choosing one of the people listed below in order to research the person's life and contributions to society and literature. This is a four-part writing project, not a technology project.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Maya Angelou
Sandra Cisneros

1. Research your chosen person's background to answer the following questions:

Why is/was she/he pivotal or noteworthy in American culture?

What was/is this person like?

What are/were their contributions to American Literature?

How did the person's life/background influence his/her work?

Write your findings in a biographical report that tells people who know nothing about this person the information they need. At the very least you should include the answers to the three questions above, plus personal background information. Family background and life experiences play a significant role in the lives of writers.

2. Read a piece written by this person and write a reaction to it. You may use the selections from the literature book or find other writings/speeches by your chosen person.

3. Write a letter to your chosen person, assuming that he/she will actually read it. What would you say?

4. Write an original poem inspired by the person's life or work.

Thus, your midterm report will consist of the following documents (each worth 25 points):

- * a biographical composition

- * a reaction to one piece of the person's writings (include title of work and a copy of the actual work if you choose something other than works in your textbook); tell me your thoughts on the subject matter itself, the writing style, and how well you think the piece works – great, good, etc., and why you think this work was worth publishing

* a letter to your person that shows you understand this person's contributions and asks real questions (that you assume the person will answer) and gives your thoughts on this person's work/goals

* a poem you've written that somehow ties to the person or his/her work(s) – at least 8 lines; if you rhyme, do it well and consistently; watch for syllable flow; if you don't rhyme, you need strong imagery and vivid words to evoke the mood you are after; create fresh similes, metaphors, and/or personification to use in your poem

Due: Nov. 7 – be sure to add a cover page.

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I. Biographical Report

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| * explains why (s)he is pivotal or noteworthy in American culture | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * explains the person's personality traits, etc. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * explains the person's contributions to American literature | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * explains the person's life/background and theorizes or explains how this background may have influenced his/her work | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * grammar, spelling, mechanics, sentence structure | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

II. Reaction to a piece of work - List Title of Work Read (attach copy if not in lit textbook)

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- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| * explains reaction to the work and its subject matter | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * discusses the writer's style | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * discusses why the piece was published | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * gives rating to the piece (excellent, good, etc.) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * grammar, spelling, mechanics, sentence structure | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

III. Letter to Author

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| * gives clear reaction to the contributions of the author | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * asks real, relevant questions that assume a response | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * gives reaction to the author's goals and/or work | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * uses proper letter format | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * grammar, spelling, mechanics, sentence structure | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

IV. Original Poem

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|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| * poem ties to author's work/life | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * contains at least 8 lines | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| * flows smoothly (syllables, line length, etc.) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| | | | | | |
| * uses figurative language/rhyme, alliteration, etc.) – free verse | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| OR | | | | | |
| * uses effective rhyme scheme | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| | | | | | |
| * grammar, spelling, etc. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |